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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2009

In Today's Papers

Ergenekon Investigation Uncovers Hidden Arms Caches

All media outlets reported over the weekend and today that police used a map, confiscated during a search of Ergenekon suspect Ibrahim Sahin's house in Ankara, that led them to a hidden weapons cache that included two light anti-tank weapons, one grenade, 300 bullets and 700 grams of plastic explosives. Sahin, the former special operations chief of police, was formally charged in connection with the Ergenekon investigation. Eight others were charged following last week's Ergenekon raids. Nine others, including retired generals Tuncay Kilinc and Kemal Yavuz, and the former chairman of the Higher Education Board (YOK) Kemal Guruz, were set free. On Sunday, weapons seized during the latest operations (25 grenades, explosives, two Kalashnikov rifles, 29 handguns, two anti-tank weapons and ammunition) were displayed to the press. Papers report the latest Ergenekon operations revealed that Sahin set up teams to assassinate prominent Alevi leaders in order to create sectarian tension prior to upcoming local elections in March 2009. Mainstream Sabah says another plan involved car bomb attacks at six shopping malls in Ankara.

Liberal Radikal reports Prime Minister Erdogan, at a party group meeting Sunday, extended support to the Ergenekon prosecutors and criticized opposition parties who are criticizing the Ergenekon investigation. "Those living in dark labyrinths are now scared," said Erdogan, adding, "The opposition and the media talk about an 'empire of fear.' Seeing what is recovered from underground, it's obvious who was planning to set up an empire of fear." Erdogan noted, "No one is above the law."

Editorial Commentary on the Ergenekon Investigation

Enis Berberoglu wrote in mainstream Hurriyet (1/11): "The current phase of the Ergenekon detentions indicates a decreasing likelihood the investigations will result in uncovering a 'deep state' coup plot. Instead, the detentions appear to be aimed at threatening the AKP's political opponents."

Fehmi Koru wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "The Ergenekon

investigation is the most serious effort to date that seeks to uncover a 50-year old 'deep state' structure."

Urban Warfare Escalates and Intensifies Danger to Civilians in Gaza

Media outlets report on the deteriorating security situation in Gaza due to escalating street violence, Israeli PM Olmert's promise to continue Israel's Gaza operations, and protests throughout the world against the operations. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak carries the headline, "We Will Continue the Killing," as "Olmert Defies the World," by "Rejecting the UN's call for a ceasefire." Conservative nationalist Turkiye reports, "Face-to-Face Battles Ensur as Palestinian Civilians Deal with Increasing Violence." Mainstream Aksam reports in, "The Street War in Gaza," that "Israel has targeted a large number of mosques since their operations began, calling mosques and schools 'weapons depots,'" as "Israeli soldiers and Hamas are engaging in violent clashes in the streets of Gaza." Mainstream Vatan reports, "Once Again, Israel Targets a Mosque." Mainstream Sabah carries the front-page headline, "Jews Revolt," as "Jewish Intellectuals write an open letter to Israel that says, 'Stop the Attack,'" but "Israel defies the world and orders tanks to advance into Gaza." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Tens of thousands of people in European capitals joined protests that denounced Israel's attacks in Gaza." Leftist Taraf carries the headline, "Israel Still Openly Challenges the World." In "These Are the Children of the Holocaust," Islamist-oriented Zaman notes the irony in the fact that the Israelis who are perpetrating the Gaza operations were born to parents who themselves fled from ethnic violence during the Holocaust. Liberal Radikal carries a quotation from Hamas leader Meshal in the headline, "Israel Is Creating a

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Holocaust."

PM's Wife Hosts a "First Ladies' Summit" to Stop Israel's Gaza Attacks

Emine Erdogan, wife of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosted Aisha Muammar Gaddafi, daughter of the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, Fauzia Gilani, wife of Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Asma Assad, wife of Syrian President Bashar Assad, Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, wife of the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Queen Rania, wife of Jordan's King Abdullah, Wafaa Suleyman, wife of the Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, and Vice speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament Bahar Muradova, during a meeting in Istanbul on Saturday.

Sunday's mainstream Vatan reports that French First Lady Carla Bruni, Spanish First Lady Espinoza, and actor Antonio Banderas sent messages in support of the meeting. During her speech at the meeting, Emine Erdogan broke into tears while describing the tragedy in Gaza and the suffering of Palestinian children. A joint declaration was issued at the end of the meeting calling on the international community to pressure Israel to stop its attacks. The wife of President Gul's wife Hayrunnisa Gul did not join the meeting.

Editorial Commentary on Israel-Gaza-Turkey

Ceyda Karan wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "Israel wants to eliminate, or at least weaken, the Hamas factor. However, it's possible that Israel's operations into Gaza may further legitimize Hamas in the eyes of the Obama administration."

Mehmet Tezkan wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Can you believe that Turkey hosted a political first ladies' show which our own first lady did not even attend or acknowledge? Emine Erdogan, wife of our prime minister, did not contribute to the Palestinians' cause by hosting her first ladies' show. Instead, her antics put Turkey in the same league with Libya, Syria and Qatar. Nobody cares about what Lybia, Syria, and Qatar think about the Middle East."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Erdogan's continual harsh and undiplomatic rhetoric towards Israel represents Erdogan's and the AKP's insensitivity toward anti-Semitism. Expressing anger against Israel's actions is one thing; becoming a member of the anti-Israeli league is another thing, but the AKP does not realize that. The Armenian Genocide Resolution campaign in the United

States will soon begin anew, and the ruling AKP members will face another reality: If they can't knock on the Jewish lobby's door for support, to whom can they turn?"

Turkish Envoy Meets with Barzani in northern Iraq
Mainstream Hurriyet and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that Turkey's special Iraqi envoy Ambassador Murat Ozcelik had several meetings with representatives of the Kurdish Regional Government in Salahaddin and Erbil last weekend. The meeting between Ozcelik and KRG President Massoud Barzani took place in Barzani's official residence and reportedly, this was the first official meeting between a Turkish official and KRG President Massoud Barzani. According to papers, political and economic relations between Turkey and the KRG were discussed during the meetings.

PJAK Ends Separatist Activities in Iran
Papers report the PJAK group, an offshoot of the terrorist PKK in Iran, announced that it has "suspended its separatist activities in Iran." According to leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet, Iran's official news agency IRNA said the PJAK-affiliated Nevruz TV reported PJAK said it was not planning to secede from the central governments in Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq, and called on other terror organizations to follow a similar policy.

Obama Sets Out Foreign Policy Goals: Iran and the Mideast
Media outlets note with great interest that U.S. President-elect

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Barack Obama told George Stephanopoulos on This Week that he will pursue a new approach of engagement with Iran and he will establish a team to work towards peace in the Middle East. Mainstream Milliyet carries the headline, "Obama's First Priority is Peace in the Middle East." Liberal Radikal writes, "Obama's First Job Is Iran and the Middle East." Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "Barack Obama Will Not Delay on The Topic of The Middle East." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Obama Will Start Work on Day One." In "The First Promises from Obama," mainstream Hurriyet reports, "Obama will pursue a new approach to Iran and will establish a new team to address the Middle East."

TV News: CNN Turk

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Ali Babacan will pay a formal visit to Kosovo on January 13.
- The Turkish Consumers' Union announces a decision to boycott goods made in Israel.
- The Council of Ministers' decision to re-instate the Turkish citizenship of the famous Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet was published in the Official Gazette.

International News

- A deal to restore Russian gas supplies via Ukraine to Europe collapses.
- The New York Times says President Bush blocked Israel's plan last year to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.
- President-elect Barack Obama signaled changes to a much-criticized 700-billion-dollar bank bailout program.

JEFFREY